

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on January 21, 2005. Claim 1 has been amended and claims 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 have been added. New claim 5 is supported throughout the specification. See, for example, the Application at page 7, line 20- page 8, line 10; page 22, lines 5-14; and Figures 1, 9A, and 9B at reference numerals 40. New claims 6 and 7 are also supported throughout the specification. See, for example, Figures 9A and 9B, and page 22 at lines 5-14. New claims 8 and 9, and the amendments to claim 1 are supported throughout the specification. See, for example, page 9, line 3-page 11, line 2. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicant submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Objections

The abstract, drawings, and specification were objected to for including typographical errors. The drawings and specification have been amended to address these issues.

Rejections

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected as being indefinite for including the phrase "such as." Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify the subject matter of the invention.

Claim 1 was rejected as being obvious over Kosak (US 6,742,808) in view of Sano (US 2001/0033094). This rejection is traversed.

Claim 1 recites a vehicle body frame comprising cast hollow frame members extending longitudinally along a vehicle body, the cast hollow frame members including at least a first frame half and a second frame half; and, a plurality of ribs provided at certain regular intervals on an inner circumferential surface of each of the cast hollow frame members so as to partition longitudinally the interior thereof at certain regular intervals. Both Kosak and Sano fail to disclose or suggest alone or in reasonable combination the features of claim 1.

Moreover, there is no motivation to combine the internal braces 22 of Sano with the rails 11 and 12 of Kosak. In fact, Kosak teaches away from such a combination. Kosak teaches the incorporation of strategically placed tension/compression strut elements for connecting the pairs of rails 11 and 12, and pairs of cross members 13 and 14 to provide an overall rigid sub-frame without adding appreciable weight to the cast sub-frame 10. See FIGS. 1-9; column 2, lines 34-50; and

column 4, lines 36-42. Adding the internal braces 22 of Sano to make the sub-frame 10 stronger would run contrary to the teaching of Kosak because Kosak emphasizes providing rigidity by connecting the members to each other rather than make each member individually stronger.

Claim 5 is not obvious for the same reasons discussed above as well as for the additional reason that Kosak fails to disclose a cast hollow frame member that is a main side frame member. The rails 11 and 12 of Kosak are not main side frame members for the vehicle. Instead, the rails 11 are part of a frame support for a component of the vehicle (i.e., the suspension of the vehicle). Since Kosak is not directed at the main side frame members of the vehicle, it naturally includes no disclosure relating to whether the component part is designed to deform to absorb the energy in a collision to protect the occupants of the vehicle. The focus of Kosak is on providing a lightweight rigid modular structure rather than to provide a structure that deforms to protect the cabin of the vehicle. Since Kosak fails to disclose or suggest a main side frame according to claim 5, claim 5 is not obvious.

Claim 2 was rejected as being obvious over Kosak in view of Sano and further in view of Yamada et al. (US 6,672,654). This rejection is traversed.

Claim 2 depends on and further limits claim 1, therefore, it is allowable for at least the reasons asserted above.

Claims 6 and 7 depend on and further limit claim 2, therefore, they are allowable for the same reasons stated above. Claims 6 and 7 are also allowable because they recite features that further distinguish the claimed invention from a radiused fillet referenced in the outstanding office action.

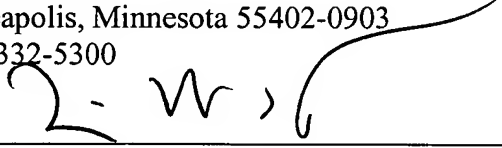
Claims 8 and 9 depend on and further limit claim 1, therefore, they are allowable for the same reasons stated above. Claims 8 and 9 also recite additional structural characteristics of the cast hollow frame member that further distinguish the claimed invention from the art of record.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Amendments to the Drawings:

The sheet of drawings attached in the Appendix includes changes to Fig. 2B. This sheet replaces the original sheet. The drawings have been changed as follows: label "t12" has been corrected to read "b12" as recommended by the Examiner.

Attachment: Replacement sheet.